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# BULLETIN

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OF

## THE PENNSYLVANIA MUSEUM MEMORIAL HALL, FAIRMOUNT PARK

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January 1, 1904

PHILADELPHIA

No. 5

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### On the Publication of Museum Art Handbooks

In order to raise a much-needed Publication Fund for the use of the Museum, the Curator has been authorized by the Museum Committee to prepare an appeal for contributions for this purpose, to be sent to such persons as may be supposed to be willing to encourage original investigation and literary work by substantial aid.

It will be generally conceded that nothing extends the influence of a Museum so widely, or gives it such high standing, as the publication of handbooks or text-books, which shall be generally accepted as authoritative contributions to the literature of art. The South Kensington Museum of London is better known throughout the world than perhaps any other, as a result of its standard publications on special subjects.

The Pennsylvania Museum has been one of the few great institutions of its kind that has not attracted the attention its valuable collections so richly deserve, because it has not kept abreast with more progressive institutions in its literary work. The first attempt by this Museum in this direction is the handbook of "Tulip Ware of the Pennsylvania-German Potters," which has recently been issued, based upon its unique collection of slip-decorated pottery, a subject which is entirely new. This book not only brings into prominence the superb collection of the Museum, but will serve as a reference work on this subject for future investigators.

There are now practically ready for publication several handbooks and catalogues, based on the collections in this Museum. The printing of these monographs, on subjects never yet treated to the satisfaction of the average student or collector, will fill a long-felt want. They will consist largely of entirely new material and will occupy an average of fifty pages each. While issued separately, each complete in itself, they will form a series of works, or several groups of series, of uniform size and style. A feature of these publications will be their numerous illustrations, many of which are already made.

Before these can be published, however, it becomes necessary to provide funds to meet the expenses of printing. Almost every other important public Museum is in possession of a Publication Fund, and is not hampered for lack of money to print its works promptly. Nothing is so disheartening to a curator as the knowledge that the original work which he has accomplished in the interest of the Museum cannot be made effective until months shall have elapsed before the necessary funds can be secured to put it into print. A modest fund, of say \$5000, should be sufficient for present requirements. The sales of copies published from this fund would revert to the fund and thus keep it practically intact.

The opportunity is here presented for some public-spirited person to furnish the needed sum, as a perpetual Publication Fund, which may take the name of the donor, or be given as a memorial in the name of a deceased friend.